

George Washington wrote, “The administration of justice is the firmest pillar of government.” Our Judicial branch upholds the rule of law in our society and strengthens our democracy. Under the Constitution, judges are granted the solemn responsibility of providing fair and impartial resolution of criminal and civil disputes.

This year’s Law Day theme, “Independent Courts Protect Our Liberties,” focuses on one of the foundations of our constitutional system: judicial independence, provided in the Federal system by life tenure and an assured level of compensation. In order to ensure equality for all citizens and fairness in the judicial process, our judges must serve as impartial arbiters who do not have a stake in their decisions or seek to achieve a biased outcome or particular result in the cases they oversee.

Our constitutional system of separation of powers places careful limits on the powers of judges and separates the responsibilities of making laws and interpreting laws between the Legislative and Judicial branches. Independent Federal judges have the autonomy to make decisions and interpret the law unfettered by outside influences. In this way, we are assured that our laws will be interpreted justly and applied with uniformity.

Our Nation’s judges must be men and women of exemplary character, wisdom, experience, and good temperament, and have a willingness to work hard. They must be jurists who will honor the public office with which they are entrusted.

This Law Day, we recognize the vital role of independent judges in upholding justice in courts throughout our land, and we resolve to continue to support and strengthen the Judicial branch, thereby helping to preserve our rights and liberties.

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, in accordance with Public Law 87–20, as amended, do hereby proclaim May 1, 2003, as Law Day, U.S.A. I call upon all the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities. I also call upon Government officials to display the flag of the United States in support of this national observance.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-seventh.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 2, 2003]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 1, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on May 5.

## Remarks on the National Day of Prayer

May 1, 2003

Thanks for coming. Thanks for the warm welcome. I’m glad you’re here at the people’s house. Laura and I welcome you. We’re really pleased to have you here. I want to thank each of you for participating in the National Day of Prayer. It’s a good time to be praying. Every day is a good day to pray. [*Laughter*]

Today we recognize the many ways our country has been blessed, and we acknowledge the source of those blessings. Millions of Americans seek guidance every day in prayer to the Almighty God. I am one of them. I also know that many Americans remember Laura and me in their prayers, and we are so very, very grateful.

I want to thank General Hicks, chaplain of the entire U.S. Army, for being here today, and thank you for your service. Shirley, thank you as well for once again being the chairwoman of the National Day of Prayer. I see you brought your husband along too. [*Laughter*]

Luis, *muchas gracias*. Thank you for your beautiful prayer. Father Joe Wallroth is going to be with us in a second. I’m honored you are here, Father.

I really want to thank the Washington National Cathedral Choir of Men and Girls. It is a fabulous way to begin a morning, to walk down the corridor here and hear your beautiful voices echo throughout this magnificent house. We’re really glad you’re here, and thank you for sharing your talents.

Julie, thank you as well for coming. Gosh, I could have sat here and listened all day to your singing. *[Laughter]*

We've got a lot of military chaplains who are here. I want to thank you for your service to your country and to those who wear our uniform. You make a tremendous difference in the lives, the daily lives of people who are frightened and lonely and worried and strong and courageous. I appreciate so very much what you have done and will continue to do.

So many great events in our Nation's history were shaped by men and women who found strength and direction in prayer. The first President to live in this house composed a prayer on his second evening here for all who would follow him. Our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln, knew that his burdens were too great for any man, so he carried them to God in prayer. Over the radio on D-day in 1944, Franklin Roosevelt prayed for God's blessing on our mission to "set free a suffering humanity."

This past month has been another time of testing for America and another time of intense prayer. Americans have been praying for the safety of our troops and for the protection of innocent life in Iraq. Americans prayed that war would not be necessary and now pray that peace will be just and lasting.

We continue to pray for the recovery of the wounded and for the comfort of all who have lost a loved one. The Scriptures say: The Lord is near to all who call on Him. Calling on God in prayer brings us nearer to each other. After his son was rescued from northern Iraq, the father of Sergeant James Riley of New Jersey said, "We have been flooded with people's prayers. Everyone is praying for us, and we are so grateful."

During Operation Iraqi Freedom, many Americans have registered online to adopt a service man or woman in prayer. Others wear prayer bracelets to remind themselves to intercede on behalf of our troops. In Fountain City, Wisconsin, Lynn Cox has collected at least 80 Bibles to send to those serving in Iraq. In Green, Ohio, a group of parishioners at Queen of Heaven Catholic Church has made 2,000 rosaries for our troops. Margaret Brown, who helped start the group, said, "We want them to know that someone back here is holding them up in

prayer and that God is so powerful He can supply all their needs."

To pray for someone else is an act of generosity. We set our own cares aside and look to strengthen another. Prayer teaches humility. We find that the plan of the Creator is sometimes very different from our own. Yet, we learn to depend on His loving will, bowing to purposes we don't always understand. Prayer can lead to a grateful heart, turning our minds to all the gifts of life and to the great works of God.

Prayer can also contribute to the life of our Nation. America is a strong nation, in part because we know the limits of human strength. All strength must be guided by wisdom and justice and humility. We pray that God will grant us that wisdom, that sense of justice, and that humility in our current challenges and in the years ahead.

I thank you all for helping to keep prayer an integral part of our national life. May God bless each one of you, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:47 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. David Hicks, USA, Deputy Chief of Chaplains, U.S. Army; Shirley Dobson, chairman, National Day of Prayer Task Force; James C. Dobson, founder and president, Focus on the Family; Luis Palau, president, Luis Palau Evangelistic Association; Col. Joseph Wallroth, USAF, Wing Chaplain, Andrews Air Force Base; and Julie Keim, soloist, Washington National Cathedral. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Exchange With Reporters Aboard the U.S.S. *Abraham Lincoln*

May 1, 2003

*[The President's remarks are joined in progress.]*

**The President.** —No, it was not me.

**Q.** *[Inaudible]*—land it?

**The President.** Not my first time on a carrier.

**Q.** How was your—

**The President.** Really exciting. I miss flying, I can tell you that. This is a formal press